[an error occurred while processing this directive]

sci-tech > computing > story page

Opinion: E-nough already!

August 23, 1999
Web posted at: 10:24 a.m. EDT (1424 GMT)

by Dylan Tweney, InfoWorld columnist

(IDG) -- Stop the insanity. I'm drowning in a sea of "e"s.

It all started innocently enough. "E-commerce" was an understandable, pronounceable abbreviation for "electronic commerce."

⊕ INTERACTIVE

What do you think of e-words?

They're e-nteresting　　**They're naus-e-ating**

View Results

But then people started adding the "e" prefix to one damn thing after another.

IBM started talking about e-business. Hewlett-Packard helped Microsoft launch eChristmas.com and then went on to offer e-Services. Then came an avalanche of e-terms, both literal and poetic: eToys, eBay, E-Loan, eConcert, eMachines, and even eEye.

This e-mania has reached its apex of ridiculousness in the term e-conomy. You can almost hear the pundits patting themselves on the back for coining that one.

And yet -- hello? -- this isn't even a new word. Someone just dropped a hyphen into a perfectly good English word -- one that already began with "e," in case you hadn't noticed.

I, for one, have had e-nough.

Yet, as a pundit myself, I have a professional obligation to coin terms. Besides, I want to help shore up the embattled forces behind the "I" prefix, short for "Internet," of course. (*InfoWorld*, bucking the trend, has long preferred "I-commerce" to "e-commerce.")

Thus, in the spirit of rampant neologisms, I propose that we call the next-generation Internet the I-nternet.

The term I-nternet, of course, refers to the fact that now even the Internet itself isn't immune

˙ MORE COMPUTING INTELLIGENCE

IDG.net home page

InfoWorld home page

InfoWorld forums home page

InfoWorld Internet commerce section

Get Media Grok and *The Industry Standard Intelligencer* delivered for free

CNN.com
MAIN PAGE
WORLD
ASIANOW
U.S.
LOCAL
POLITICS
WEATHER
BUSINESS
SPORTS
TECHNOLOGY
   computing
   personal technology
   space
NATURE
ENTERTAINMENT
BOOKS
TRAVEL
FOOD
HEALTH
STYLE
IN-DEPTH

custom news
Headline News brief
daily almanac
CNN networks
CNN programs
on-air transcripts
news quiz

CNN WEB SITES:
myCNN.com CNNSI
allpolitics CNNfn
EN ESPAÑOL
em português
SVENSKA
NORGE
danmark
TIME INC. SITES:
MORE SERVICES:
video on demand
video archive

to the disruptive, decentralizing forces of the Internet.

Three recent battles over Net technologies -- the DNS, instant messaging, and Web page annotations -- illustrate the point.

The Internet's DNS, the key to readable Net addresses, has long been administered by a single government contractor, Network Solutions Inc. (NSI). The U.S. government proposed a more open, decentralized system, to be organized by the nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). Yet ICANN is proving itself incapable of creating a workable alternative, and NSI meanwhile remains firmly in control.

In other words, the entire I-nternet, which ostensibly empowers small companies to compete with the biggest ones, is being held hostage by a single government contractor.

Another I-nternet attraction is the topsy-turvy farce of Microsoft lashing out at America Online for refusing to make its chat client, AOL Instant Messenger, interoperable with Microsoft's chat client, MSN Messenger.

Microsoft, the champion of openness? Give me a break. At no point has Microsoft offered to open its own chat client to AOL or anyone else -- openness only goes one way here.

On the I-nternet, "openness" may be nothing more than a verbal cudgel wielded by the public relations groups in big corporations.

And yet, once in awhile something comes along that really does open things up a bit. One such technology is Third Voice, a browser add-on that lets anyone stick virtual Post-it Notes on any Web page, for the whole world to see.

Third Voice has provoked strong reactions. The company and its proponents call the plug-in a powerful tool for free speech. Yet Web publishers are aghast that their Web sites are getting "tagged" by Third Voice graffiti.

Nowadays, when everything starts with an "e," the Web itself almost seems passe. That's why I'm glad there are still new technologies capable of provoking outrage and debate.

Dylan Tweney is the content development manager for InfoWorld Electric.

RELATED STORIES:

[Web should prepare for a non-English majority](#)
June 14, 1999
[Group created to help ICANN manage the Internet](#)
June 1, 1999
[Appeals court dismisses domain-name antitrust charge](#)
May 19, 1999

RELATED IDG.net STORIES:

[Technology is helping us mangle our language more quickly than ever](#)
(*InfoWorld Electric*)
[Another look at the effect of technology on language](#)
(*InfoWorld Electric*)
[Name games: Internet naming terms](#)
(*Network World Fusion*)
[Technopropisms: What you read isn't what someone meant to write](#)
(*InfoWorld Electric*)
[Respect and understand new ideas in order to separate the good ones from the bad](#)
(*InfoWorld Electric*)
[When words collide: How to communicate with a nontechnical boss](#)
(*Network World Fusion*)

Note: Pages will open in a new browser window
External sites are not endorsed by CNN Interactive.

RELATED SITES:

[Third Voice](#)
[Net Lingo: The Internet Language Dictionary](#)

Note: Pages will open in a new browser window
External sites are not endorsed by CNN Interactive.

LATEST HEADLINES:

SEARCH CNN.com

Enter keyword(s)   **go   help**